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Meet the Presenter…

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On the topic:

How To Be The Boss of the Front Desk
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How To Be The Boss of the Front Desk

Presented by:
Merrilee Severino, CPC, CMMP

Objective

• Find out what your superiors are looking for in a medical receptionist.
• Feel more in control of your career as a medical receptionist.
• How to take your “game” to the next level.
Desired Competencies

• Medical Terminology & Anatomy
• Legal aspects of healthcare
• Customer service
• Scheduling
• Listening skills
• Sales

Characteristics

• Assertive and professional
• Well-groomed
• Maintains direct eye contact
• Friendly
• Calm
• Ability to multitask with accuracy
• Punctual
What Do Bosses Want?

Recently I asked office managers what traits they were looking for in their front desk staff…..

Responses

• Someone whom pays attention to detail when entering demographics and knows what has to happen for insurance
  - Jenn Wilkes

• Friendly, but firm.
  - Charlene Burgett
Responses

• Someone whom does not act like a know it all and insist on telling everyone else what they do wrong.
  - Darrell Ledbetter

• Great smile with an intuitive nature. “They are the face that everyone sees first”
  - Joyce Barber McDevitt

The Most Important Position in the Office

• In my opinion, the receptionist is the most important position in the medical office

• Unfortunately the receptionist may also be the lowest paid and considered “entry level”
“Anyone Can Do It”

So much can go wrong with this outlook:

• malpractice suits
• bad social media reviews
• loss of revenue
• termination of insurance contracts

Front Office Professionals

• No longer are the duties of the front desk limited to answering the phone and making appointments for patients.

• From customer service to effective time management to enhancing patient relations, the front office has an ever increasing number and level of responsibilities.
First Impressions

• Seize the opportunities to make a positive impact on your patients’ experience.
• Patient satisfaction can lead to increased reimbursement.
• High patient retention rates and improved social media reviews will contribute to the success of the practice.

Attitude

• Attitude is contagious.
• A positive attitude coupled with a good work ethic and a genuine willingness to be helpful is indispensable.
• Be patient with patients!
Professional Etiquette

• General Rule of thumb: *RESPECT*
  – “Honey”, “Sweetie”, “Dear” etc. are insulting to some people
  – Do *NOT* call patients by their first name

Data Collection

• ASK, ASK, ASK!
  – Have patients spell their names
• Pay great attention to the details when verifying patient IDs, insurance, and medical information (i.e., allergy info)
Telephone Procedures

• Be alert and ready to respond to any inquiry
• Always answer phone by the third ring
• Never put a caller on hold without a response
• Avoid leaving them on hold longer than 45 seconds without an update
• Repeat information for clarification
• Do NOT dispense medical advice (this can be malpractice)

Appointment Scheduling

• Be prepared to juggle multiple providers’ schedules.
• Scheduling should be realistic.
• Errors result in long wait times, gaps for providers, and unnecessary overtime
• Inform patients when they arrive of how long the wait will be.
Avoid Scheduling Snafus

• Not scheduling a follow up can result in neglect malpractice claim
• Not scheduling your HCC patients can result in lower scores translating to lower reimbursement
• Failure to schedule patients can result in them going elsewhere

Time Management

• Be a master of time management!
  – Evaluate how you are spending your time
  – Create time management goals
  – Implement a time management plan
  – Limit distractions
  – Get plenty of rest, exercise and nourishment
Communication

• Good communication skills are essential for smooth interactions with patients, staff, and providers.
• You may encounter a conflict, very strong emotions, a medical emergency, etc.
• Know the practice’s policies, procedure, and protocols.

Communication Skills That Promote Patient Engagement

• Empathy
• Attentiveness
• Friendliness
• A genuine interest in the patient
• Willingness to initiate conversations
• Investing time and effort to educate patient
Tools Of The Trade

• Bluetooth, ergonomic keyboards, footrests, good shoes, mirror, PDR, medical dictionary, etc.
• Place yourself in a position of power
   – i.e., if you have trouble being assertive, do not put yourself in a position that you are having to look up at a patient to ask a question

Privacy

• All patients have the right to confidential care. You are responsible for maintaining strict confidentiality.
• If you are doing the financial counseling or scheduling patients with other practices, make sure you have a private area to talk to a patient.
• Don’t use a patients name in front of other patients when delivering phone messages etc.
HIPAA

Common Privacy Violations:

• Overheard Conversation – i.e. receptionist is having a conversation with a patient in your office while scheduling them with an oncologist

• Employee leaves desk with the computer screen visible

The Big Picture

• Understanding the big picture in your practice can increase reimbursement.
  – Know where to document the social history and other key pieces of patient information.
  – Get engaged. Medical office staff drive the patient experience; strive to optimize it.

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Motivation

• Care about others
• Be aware of your own biases
• Keep others informed of changes
• Go out of your way to help others
• Be willing to learn from others
• Demonstrate confidence
• Exhibit personal diligence

Questions?

• Thank you for your attendance!

• Get your questions answered on PMI’s Discussion Forum:
  http://www.pmimd.com/pmiForums/rules.asp